



# Referee body cameras in grassroots football

## **Trial protocol**

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The International Football Association Board

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## Background

The IFAB AGM in 2022 gave permission for a limited trial involving referees in grassroots football wearing body cameras (bodycams) during their games. This trial is part of an overall endeavour by the IFAB to identify possible measures to improve player/coach behavior during matches.

The aims of the trial are to explore whether the wearing and deployment of bodycams by referees in grassroots football acts as a deterrent and therefore:

- improves participant (player and coach) behaviour towards match officials
- affords the match officials some safety and protection

The following principles and practicalities must be followed throughout the trial to provide clarity and consistent use, and to ensure the data/feedback generated will allow The IFAB to make an informed decision on any future use across the game.

Any national FA wishing to join the trial must:

- apply in writing to The IFAB, clearly outlining in which competition(s) they would like referees to wear bodycams
- receive written permission from The IFAB to join the trial
- ensure that the principles and protocols are applied fully and without amendment or deviation (unless previously agreed with The IFAB)
- ensure that bodycams are not used in any competitions for which permission has not been given
- provide all requested data/feedback to The IFAB

## Principles

- The trial is limited to grassroots football (adult and youth)
- The bodycam is only permitted to be worn in those competitions which are approved as part of the official IFAB trial
- The equipment will be provided by the national FA and will remain the property of the national FA
- The bodycam is worn only by the referee
- The default position of the bodycam is OFF (i.e. it is not activated for the entire game)
- The bodycam is only activated by the referee in exceptional circumstances (see below)

- All footage is the property of the national FA
- The recording(s) of any misconduct/discipline incidents which required the referee to activate the bodycam must be sent post-match to the designated person(s) from the national FA
- The sharing of footage by the referee (except as outlined above) is strictly prohibited and will be considered as misconduct. The bodycam devices must be encrypted as such to stop this function
- Footage will only be used by the national FA's discipline departments as supporting evidence, where deemed necessary and appropriate
- All footage must be destroyed within 60 days and must not be stored by the national FA beyond that time

### **Practicalities**

1. Prior to kick-off, the referee should remind club officials from both teams that the bodycam can be activated during the game
2. The referee should remind the captains during the coin toss that the bodycam can be activated in the game
3. The bodycam should only be activated (before, during and after) in exceptional circumstances e.g.
  - if the referee feels in danger or their safety is being compromised or threatened
  - for a sending-off (red card) or other key match incident where the referee experiences or anticipates serious misconduct towards the referee
  - for serious misconduct towards a match official committed by a club official during and/or shortly after a sending-off (red card) or other key match incident
4. Wherever possible, the referee should always advise the player(s) the bodycam is being activated
5. The bodycam is not used to record:
  - misconduct between players
  - individual incidents/decisions– e.g. handball, DOGSO, serious foul play etc.
6. The bodycam is not to be activated to capture non-participant behaviour (spectators, parents, public etc)
7. If the bodycam is activated, the referee should return the bodycam to its default position of 'OFF' when the misconduct incident has ended

8. Post-match, the referee must report all match misconduct/discipline as normal (including those where the bodycam has been activated)
9. Post-match, the referee should maintain the bodycam device by charging and downloading any footage as per the processes outlined in the guidelines provided by bodycam supplier.

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